

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 TOKYO 04908 210256 Z

71

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-10 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DOTE-00 DODE-00 PA-03 USIA-12

PRS-01 RSR-01 /061 W

----- 130304

R 201030 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3298

INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

UNCLAS TOKYO 4908

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: ELAB JA

SUBJECT: SPRING LABOR OFFENSIVE IN PERSPECTIVE

REF: TOKYO A-313

SUMMARY: APRIL 17 SPOT STRIKES AND GO- SLOW TACTICS DISRUPTED RAIL TRANSPORTATION BUT DID LITTLE ECONOMIC DAMAGE. ALTHOUGH ANNOUNCED DEMAND WAS FOR HIGHER PENSIONS, BASIC ISSUE OF ANNUAL SPRING LABOR OFFENSIVE, OF WHICH APRIL 17 DISPUTE TACTICS WERE INTEGRAL PART, IS CAMPAIGN FOR WAGE INCREASES. (QTE FINAL SHOWDOWN STRIKES UNQTE BEGIN APRIL 24, PEAKING 27 TH AND CONTINUING THROUGH 30 TH. (HOPE EXISTS FACE- SAVING FORMULA WILL BE FOUND SO THE STRIKES CAN BE CALLED OFF BY APRIL 27). STRIKES AND SLOWDOWNS BEING CONDUCTED ALMOST ENTIRELY BY PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS WHOSE MEMBERS LEGALLY CANNOT STRIKE AND MUST LOOK TO DIET FOR WAGE INCREASE APPROVAL. WAGE NEGOTIATIONS IN PRIVATE INDUSTRY ALSO NOT EXPECTED TO CLIMAX UNTIL AFTER APRIL 25. END SUMMARY

1. ORGANIZED, ORCHESTRATED AND DOMINATED BY SOHYO, THIS YEAR' S THIRD WAVE OF SPRING LABOR OFFENSIVE WENT OFF ON SCHEDULED APRIL 17. MAJOR IMPACT WAS ON RAIL TRANSPORTATION. SOHYO UNIONS OF JAPANESE NATIONAL RAILWAY WORKERS OBSERVED WORK- TO- RULE SLOWDOWNS AND CALLED SHORT SPOT STRIKES IN KEY

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 TOKYO 04908 210256 Z

LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY. JNR SERVICES PARALYZED UNTIL LATE AFTERNOON: 2,649 PASSENGER TRAINS CANCELLED, 3,338 FREIGHT TRAINS STOPPED. AN ESTIMATED 9 MILLION COMMUTERS STRANDED OR JAMPAKED ON WHAT TRAINS DID RUN. (PRIVATE RR WORKERS UNION STRUCK ONLY SYMBOLICALLY FROM MIDNIGHT TO 0630) DESPITE DELAYS AND CONFUSION, NO VIOLENT COMMUTER REACTIONS OCCURRED AS IN MARCH. JNR TALLIED COST OF STRIKE IN LOST REVENUES AT 4.5 MILLION DOLLARS.

2. JAPANESE UNIONS CONDUCT WAGE INCREASE NEGOTIATIONS EVERY SPRING. QTE SPRING LABOR OFFENSIVE UNQTE IS SRDYD INSTITUTION BEGUN IN 1950'S IN WHICH SOME UNIONS COORDINATE THEIR WAGE CAMPAIGNS, UNDER SOHYO DOMINATION BUT WITH PARTICIPATION BY CHURITSUOREN AND SOME INDEPENDENTS, JOINT STRUGGLE COMMITTEE PLANS CAMPAIGN WHICH THIS YEAR BEGAN IN FEBRUARY AND CLIMAXES APRIL 27. PARTICIPANTS PREDOMINANTLY MEMBERS SOHYO'S UNIONS IN GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT CORPORATIONS. NEITHER GROUP CAN LEGALLY STRIKE BUT COUNTERMEASURES SO FAR HAVE PROVED INADEQUATE. (OVER 130,000 INDIVIDUAL DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS FROM 1973 SPRING OFFENSIVE ARE STILL PENDING.) ARSENAL OF DISPUTE TACTICS RANGES FROM WEARING ARMBANDS AT WORK, THROUGH SYMBOLIC 30 MINUTE OR ONE HOUR STRIKES (SOMETIMES BEFORE WORK DAY BEGINS), WORKSHOP RALLIES, SLOWDOWNS AND SPOT STRIKES, UP TO REGULAR STRIKES FOR AS LONG AS 72 HOURS.

3. APRIL 17 STRIKE ISSUE WAS DEMAND FOR HIGHER PENSIONS. (SOHYO THROUGH THE JSP IS PUSHING A BILL TO INCREASE PENSIONS FROM PRESENT 75 DOLLARS MONTHLY MAXIMUM TO 237 DOLLARS; AND LDP HAS PROPOSED LEGISLATION RAISING IT TO 187 DOLLARS.) PENSION ISSUE TIMELY BUT NOT BASIC. ENTIRE SPRING STRUGGLE CAMPAIGN IS DESIGNED TO DEMONSTRATE UNION STRENGTH IN SUPPORT OF WAGE DEMANDS.

4. UNIONS IN PRIVATE INDUSTRY BOTH WITHIN SPRING STRUGGLE FRAMEWORK AND INDEPENDENTLY ARE CURRENTLY BARGAINING FOR WAGE INCREASES. LABOR PARTICULARLY AGGRESSIVE THIS YEAR SINCE INFLATION REDUCED 1972 EARNINGS BY 5.5 PERCENT. IN ADDITION, PROFITABILITY OF JAPANESE INDUSTRY AND EXTREMELY TIGHT LABOR MARKET FOR YOUNG WORKERS COMBINE TO MAKE SUBSTANTIAL RAISES A GOOD POSSIBILITY. SO UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 TOKYO 04908 210256 Z

FAR ONLY SIGNIFICANT SETTLEMENT IS BY KAIIN. OCEAN- GOING

EAMEN WIL RECEIVE AN AVERAGE OF 70 DOLLARS MORE MONTHLY THIS YEAR - AN 18 PERCENT INCREASE COMPARED WITH 15.6 PERCENT WON IN 1972. THIS YEAR AGAIN AN EARLY SETTLEMEN BETWEEN THE BIG STEEL COMPANIES AND THEIR UNIONS IS EXPECTED TO SET PATTERN. STEEL MANAGEMENT' S JOINT OFFER EXPECTED APRIL 25.

5. IF WAGES WERE ONLY PROBLEM, SHOWDOWN STRIKES WOULD NOT POSE SUCH THREAT. REFLECTING TREND OF PRIVATE INDUSTRY SETTLEMENTS GOJ CAN BE EXPECTED OFFER TO PUBLIC CORPORATION UNIONS ACCEPABLE INCREASES. PENSION AND MOST OTHER TERTAIRY DEMANDS AS TYE HAVE NSUFFICNE APPEAL TO BECOME STRIKE ISSUES. BUT SOHYO HAS ALSO STRESSED LIFTING STRIKE PROHIBITION IN PUBLIC SECTOR AS MAJOR DEMAND. HERE GOJ AND SOHYO BOTH SO LOCKED INTO- COMPROMISE POSITIONS THAT FACE- SAVING FORMULA MAY BE HARD TO FIND. SOHYO LEADERS NOW DEMANDING MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER. SO FAR HE' S DECLINED. POSSIBLY AS STRIKE PRESSURE MOUNTS, HE MAY AGREE. THEN IF THE WAGE OFFER IS ADEQUATE AND HE CAN OFFER EVEN A SYMBOLIC CONCESSION ON THE STRIKE RIGHT ISSUE, SHOWDOWN STRIKES, WHICH INEVITABLY WILL BE CALLED, COULD BE SHORTENED. INGERSOLL

UNCLASSIFIED

*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 APR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973TOKYO04908
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: TOKYO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730447/aaaaitmn.tel
Line Count: 140
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 TOKYO A-313
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kellerpr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 DEC 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03-Dec-2001 by elbezefj>; APPROVED <01 MAR 2002 by kellerpr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 980127
Subject: SPRING LABOR OFFENSIVE IN PERSPECTIVE
TAGS: ELAB, JA
To: EA
MANILA
SECSTATE WASHDC
SEOUL
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005